

REPORT
OF THE
VISITING PHYSICIAN
OF THE
OREGON HOSPITAL
FOR
THE INSANE, 2778
FOR 1867-8.

SALEM, OREGON:
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1868.

PORTLAND OR.

REPORT.

PORTLAND, Sept. 7, 1868.

To his Excellency, GEORGE L. WOODS,

Governor of Oregon:

SIR:—I have the honor to submit the following report on the condition of the Insane Asylum of the State of Oregon: for two years, ending August 31st, 1868.

In compliance with my official duties I have visited the Asylum monthly, for the purpose of examining the patients, and inspecting the premises, and seeing that the contractors, Drs. J. C. Hawthorne and A. M. Loryea, performed their part of the agreement in a faithful and satisfactory manner.

I have taken pains during all this time to ascertain that the patients received the necessary care and attention, so as to render general satisfaction to the people, with the determination that nothing should be wanting that would in any way be conducive to their bodily health and comfort; and nothing has been left undone that would further the attainment of that end.

The resident physicians have done all in their power to make this a first-class institution, and to-day it is an evidence of their success, they having succeeded in bringing it up to the highest standard, thus making it a credit to our State.

I shall refer your Excellency to the statistics of the resident physicians, embodied in their biennial report to you, which, upon careful examination, I find agree in every respect with my own. The largest proportion, according to the statistics, belongs to the laboring class, and the conclusions derived therefrom make it manifest to an observer that continuous hard labor, with an insufficient amount of mental

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recreation, is highly conducive to, and exercises a strong influence over, the mind, and causes the development of diseases of that organ. Mechanical occupations, requiring a greater amount of mental labor, have a tendency to decrease the ratio; and if we carry the investigations among the learned professions—the literary and scientific—whose minds are in constant activity, with a small amount of physical labor to perform, the ratio decreases considerably. This goes to prove conclusively that in order to maintain a healthy condition of the mind, we must increase the mental labor, and decrease the physical. There must be more recreation among the laboring classes of our population, if we would lessen the number of our insane. In order to check the rapid increase of this appalling infliction, annually on the increase, it becomes necessary to alleviate the physical condition, and lighten the burdens now oppressing our laboring classes, and increase their facilities for attaining a higher grade of mental culture.

Of the total number (141) who have been treated since August 31, 1866, twenty-two and a half (22½) per cent. have been cured; and, compared with the number of admissions, sixty-one (61) from the above-named date, forty-nine (49) per cent. have been cured, and improved. This bears a favorable comparison with other institutions. The deaths amount to eleven (11) per cent. of the whole number treated, and indicates the healthy condition of the Asylum. The report further shows the admission of a patient, (a female), who was not insane. This was either carelessness, or ignorance, on the part of the examining physician. Too much care cannot be exercised in such examinations, as an irreparable injury is done by pronouncing a sane person insane; and for the purpose of doing justice to other counties of the State, I will state that she was from Multnomah county.

I would suggest the propriety of having all persons, before their admission to the Asylum, taken before the inspecting

physician for examination, and if he considers them of unsound mind, require him to certify officially to that effect. This would be a safeguard against occurrences of the kind in the future.

The number remaining on the 31st day of August, 1868, was (91) ninety-one; of this number (49) forty-nine, including (6) six idiotic patients are chronic, nearly all of whom are considered as incurable, and medical treatment of no avail. Care and comfort, with proper hygienic regulations, is all that is necessary, and may eventually be the means of restoring some of them that now appear hopeless. The remainder, (31) thirty one are considered curable. Including the (11) eleven doubtful ones, we have (42) forty-two who are amenable to treatment, many of whom are now rapidly improving. These cases require special medical treatment, and no doubt a large majority of them will be restored to reason, who otherwise would remain permanently demented, and eke out a miserable existence in the Asylum. Special provision ought to be made for daily instructions to be given to all idiotic patients in the rudiments of English education, and some trade or manual labor that would enable them, at some future time, to support themselves. There are six idiots now in the Asylum. Four out of that number would in a short time be able to support themselves.

The most productive cause of insanity in this State is *self-abuse*. Fifty (50) per cent. of the whole number who have undergone treatment, and yet remaining, can trace their unfortunate condition, either directly or indirectly, to this degrading vice. The indications are that it is increasing at a fearful rate among the youth of the land, and unless something is done to check it, many who now have a bright future before them will become inmates of an Insane Asylum, or an Almshouse. In all communities we meet with the victims of this abominable vice, in a state of premature decay, who might be restored by friendly advice. "A decline" and

"consumption" get the credit for most of these untimely deaths.

Next on the list comes intemperance, as having furnished the second highest number of our insane. Twenty (20) per cent. of the entire number was brought to insanity by the use of alcoholic stimulants alone. In its direct effect, it sends forth the raving maniac. Softening of the brain is the result, when a mild form obtains, when idiocy or complete stupor follows. It is horrible to contemplate, that the most deplorable condition that befalls man should be caused by the monstrous and growing evil of intemperance.

Domestic afflictions, pecuniary losses, and religious excitement, furnish the remainder, and most of them can be traced to families wherein a hereditary tendency already exists.

One more cause I will mention, not heretofore spoken of, which is exclusively among females, and arises from uterine derangement, or more generally speaking, suppression of the menses. These cases generally recover after the functional derangement is corrected.

In the summer of 1866, several acres of ground, shaded by a beautiful fir grove, were enclosed with a high board fence, and well provided with swings and various other fixtures for gymnastic exercise, for the benefit and amusement of the inmates; also, games of ball, draughts, and quoits were introduced, all of which is calculated to divert their attention and produce a soothing effect on the mind.

The following named articles constitute the diet: Meats: Beef, pork, mutton, and salmon, both fresh and salted. Vegetables—Potatoes, cabbage, turnips, onions, tomatoes, parsnips, lettuce, beets, beans, peas, etc. Drink—Coffee and tea. Fruit—Of various kinds in season; and dried, when out of season. Bread of the best quality is supplied in abundance. Sugar and molasses are furnished at all the meals.

The building is divided off into wards, each one of which contains a water closet, and a bath room, with hot and cold

water for bathing purposes, constantly kept in good order. This is a great convenience, and greatly adds to the health of the patients. The whole building is constantly kept scrupulously clean and thoroughly ventilated.

The dining rooms, kitchen, and bake house are well supplied with all the necessary fixtures, and the most improved utensils are provided, all of which are kept neatly and in proper order.

The dispensary connected with the place is always supplied with a good stock of standard drugs, and is always kept in excellent condition.

Sewing and knitting and ironing is the employment of the females. They manufacture the greater part of the clothing worn by the males, and all that is worn by themselves; affording them light employment, and relieving the monotony of their confinement. A limited number of the convalescent males is employed at different kinds of out-door work on the farm and in the gardens. It would be a great advantage if more were so employed, as it would hasten their restoration; but the limited number of attendants will not admit of it. The clothing worn by the males is of Oregon manufacture, of good quality; and that of the females is calicoes—and all are constantly kept neat and clean.

The supply of water comes from an excellent spring, which is thrown into a large reservoir. The reservoir is on a high tower, built expressly for this purpose, with hose attached of sufficient length to discharge water on any part of the building.

During my official connection with this institution, little discipline has been required; and what has been resorted to has been of the mildest form; and but few instances have occurred, to my knowledge, requiring any. Upon several occasions, it became necessary to confine the hands of patients, to prevent them from injuring themselves and others; and some had to be confined to their rooms for several days.

Kind treatment and firmness have much influence in restraining this class of patients, and, when strictly adhered to, has given the best satisfaction.

I have to report the occurrence of two accidents, whereby two of the inmates lost their lives at the hand of one of the patients. In both these cases I made a thorough investigation, and found no blame attached to any one.

Much credit should be awarded to John Kenworthy, the efficient Superintendent, for the manner in which he has conducted the affairs of the institution for the past two years. His loss could not well be supplied on this coast, and I hope he may be spared to us for a long time to come, for the benefit of the patients and the interest of the State.

While giving credit to all the Wardens for the management of their wards, I must make especial mention of Mr. Beatty, and commend him for the uniform good order and cleanliness of his ward.

There is much that might properly be said here, but it would be only a repetition of what has been already said in the report of Drs. Hawthorne and Loryea. Trusting that I have so performed the duties of my office as to meet with your Excellency's approval,

I have the honor to be

Your ob't serv't,

J. S. GILTNER, M. D.,

Visiting Physician of the Insane Asylum.

REPORT

OF THE

INSPECTING PHYSICIAN

TO THE

INSANE ASYLUM; OREGON.

TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY THEREOF.

SIXTH REGULAR SESSION.

SEPTEMBER, 1870.

SALEM, OREGON:

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